MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~   July 27, 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL GRAHAM

FROM: A. W. Marshall

SUBJECT: List of Key Substantive Intelligence Questions

This is a quick response per your request and contains our first impression of the list and some initial comments.

The list seems generally good. At the moment we do not have any specific additions to suggest nor subtractions to recommend. Given a longer period of time, we could try to get the next addition of this list staffed through the NSC staff. One comment I would have, however, is the following. Your list is extensive and the description of each item is fairly brief. In the effort I have launched for the NSCIC Working Group I have been concerned with trying to produce a short list; however, each topic is described in some detail. The objective is to orient the community as to why the issue and associated set of questions are important, and to provide considerable detail on the specific questions that the top-level people are most concerned about. In other words, the attempt has been to try to increase the amount of communication on a few items between the top-level people and the community.

This approach is based on my view that one of the principal problems is that, while the community people often know that a particular general subject area is important, the thing that is often missing is a detailed enough understanding of specifically what is important to the top-level decisionmakers about that particular issue, what particular aspect of the problem is most worrying them, etc. Also, there has been a problem in the past with regard to the character of the product produced by the community in that it tends to focus on answering a limited number of specific questions rather than trying to pull everything together and to provide some new perspective and understanding for the top-level people about broader aspects of the problem.

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This contrast between the nature of the list you are preparing and the effort I have been undertaking raises some questions as to the function of the two efforts, how they can best be coordinated, what sort of response one is trying to evoke from the community. We may need to try to elaborate a joint strategy for the NSCIC effort and that of the DCI. There are also a number of major resource and workload problems for the intelligence community that are implied by this upsurge in guidance from the top. Perhaps we need to discuss these problems and what sorts of procedures one would suggest to provide guidance as to priority, to mediate conflicting claims on sources within the community, etc. Also, a flow of guidance is developing, but unless it is reinforced by a continuous process of monitoring and control, over time the producers will cease to respond to it. How are we to provide this monitoring?